



**“Continuing Innovation in Prevention”**  
*as prepared for delivery*  
**Sexual Assault Prevention and Response**  
**Leadership Summit**  
**Monday, 17 November 2008**

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**General Norty Schwartz**

Thank you, General Newton, for that fine introduction. I join Secretary Donley in welcoming all of you this morning and I especially want to thank General Newton for arranging this important summit.

The subject is not new to us. It was a topic at several CORONA conferences, beginning in 2003, when our senior leadership recognized the problem and took significant steps to address it. But it is a topic that merits constant and continuing attention.

Sexual assault and the contributing behaviors surrounding it are terrible in both effect and complexity. We are still learning about the impact of this criminal behavior on its victims, how it devastates our ability to accomplish the mission and what each and every one of us can do to eliminate it.

Air Force leaders rely upon the insight and support from many sources of expertise on this subject--several of them join us here today and we are grateful for their help. As Secretary Donley mentioned already, we continue to learn from them and have benefited from their assistance. We must all listen carefully to what they are telling us, we must understand the sources and causes and we must demonstrate understanding in order to engage effective preventative measures to rid our Air Force of a most harmful crime.

America's Airmen deserve nothing less than our full devotion to eradicating the threatening behavior to their well being. I am grateful for the opportunity to talk to you directly about how we are going to succeed together in this essential effort.

## OUR DIRECTION

We are on a journey to eliminate sexual assault by fostering a culture that actively rejects this and similar criminal behaviors. We have been aggressive in our initial campaign to fight this problem, but we must remain vigilant at all levels of leadership, careful and alert to resisting any complacency. This is a leadership issue from top to bottom and every Airman must lead in their own capacity from senior leaders to individuals watching out for their fellow Airmen. Everyone is a leader when it comes to preventing this terrible behavior.



Over 547,000 Air Force individuals viewed the video “Targeting Sexual Assault.” Our senior leaders delivered our resolute “no tolerance” message directly and I trust no one thinks we’re kidding. We funded full-time Sexual Assault Response Coordinators at installations and placed them under the supervision of our Vice Wing Commanders and we deploy these SARCs with us in theater. The message should be loud and clear: addressing this problem is a foremost and direct responsibility of our commanders and the collective responsibility of our community of Airmen.

Committed leadership is fundamental to our success, and that success is the product of our cooperative efforts together. We expect full leadership engagement—every one of our command elements will be active and supportive of this vital program. All Airmen at all levels of leadership play a critical part in modeling correct behavior, communicating our commitment to a “no tolerance,” compliance-oriented culture and taking all possible actions for the elimination of sexual assault.

Our Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response program focuses on the word “response.” That primary focus is on meeting the needs of the victims. The Restricted Reporting option allows victims to come forward for help, to receive the care they need and provides them with the choice of pursuing investigation in order to meet their immediate needs first while preserving the good order and discipline of our Air Force.

Through the end of fiscal year 2007, almost 700 victims have opted for restricted reporting. Our collective leadership has built upon the skills of our investigators, lawyers, and trial judges in understanding some of the unique complexities of this crime, but we cannot simply focus on response.

We must ask ourselves the tough questions about prevention. How do we stop an assault before it happens? Training and education are critical to our prevention efforts. Throughout this summit, you will hear national experts offer guidance on how best to educate ourselves on the subject of sexual assault prevention and response.

Some of the experts you will soon hear from during this summit have been key participants in creating an innovative bystander intervention training module. The new training, geared for small-group interactive skills development, will help train Airmen to stop sexual assaults before they occur by utilizing effective and positive approaches. Prevention is a key to our success in this effort and we will emphasize new preventative means as we learn more.



## CONCLUSION

Throughout the history of the Air Force, we have been focused on developing the technical skills of our Airmen. We develop our Airmen with specialized expertise to meet our mission objectives. We train our Airmen to repair and operate advanced aircraft, maintain airfields and installations, and innovate with complex space and cyberspace technology. We must also develop our Airmen with modern methods of recognizing situations that lead to sexual assault and encourage them to take preventative action. These skills will benefit us in so many ways. We build upon a strong foundation of Air Force Core Values with our continued emphasis on teamwork at all levels to strengthen our “no tolerance” mandate for sexual assaults.

I fully recognize that there are many competing priorities for leaders’ resources, time and efforts, but combating sexual assault must remain an undeniable priority for this crime’s effect is larger than a negative impact to our mission. It is a negative impact on our most valuable of resources. This crime threatens our people and for that reason alone it is intolerable and incompatible with who and what we are. Our Airmen serve in a dangerous world where others would seek to do them harm as enemies. We will not rest until we eradicate all behavior that would similarly do them harm from within our ranks.

I am confident that I have your complete support and commitment to protect our fellow Air Force family members. We will be successful together. I look forward to hearing about our continued innovation in prevention efforts.

Thank you for all you do in this effort on behalf of an Air Force that still promises opportunity, fairness and a work environment based on respect for each and every Airmen, regardless of race, gender, creed or religion. Let us all keep that enduring promise together. Thank you.